

THE TERRITORIAL DIFFERENCES OF THE CHANGES IN  
THE PERIPHERAL POPULATION OF THE SOUTHERN PART  
OF THE GREAT HUNGARIAN PLAIN

/1960-1970/

J. T ó t h  
Szeged University  
/Hungary/

The southern part of the Great Plain /the counties of Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád and Békés/ belongs to those areas of our country where owing to a peculiar historical-economic development the ratio of the peripheral population is high.

According to the data of the 1970 census, 22,3 per cent of the population of the southern /part of the/ Great Plain, as against the nationwide 8,3 per cent, live in suburban peripheral areas.

The urban areas of towns and villages afford living place to 34,5 and 43,2 per cent respectively of the population. /The national ratios are 43,1 and 43,6 per cent respectively./

The nationwide ratio of the peripheral population of the towns is 4,4, that of the villages 11,5 per cent. This roughly two and a half times difference in the ratio exists also between the towns and villages of the southern Great Plain,

but the ratio numbers are higher. The ratio of the peripheral population of the towns is 12,8 per cent, that is it is higher than the nationwide average of the villages. More than 20 per cent of the population of some towns live even now in suburban peripheral areas. /Szarvas, Kiskunhalas, Kiskunfélegyháza, Kecskemét are in this respect the first in the country./ The average value of 28,5 per cent of the villages comprise many ratios of even 70 to 90 per cent.

In the territory of the southern Great Plain the great majority of the peripheral population live on farms.

The farm is under definite historical-economic conditions a type of settlement corresponding to, and characteristic of, the type of agricultural production.

The large-scale social and political changes that have taken place in the last quarter of a century, especially the socialist reorganization of the agriculture, have created a contradiction between the new framework of production and the form of settlement become anachronistic, which has led to a decrease in the number of the farmland population. This process has coincided with the social reshuffle in the wake of large-scale industrialization, the territorial regrouping of the population, and it corresponds also to our objectives.

But the decrease of the farmland population has not taken place with the speed and uniformity expected at the beginning. Besides other, and not only economic, factors the growth of the role of household farming plots has strengthened the economic basis of the farms which ensure favorable conditions of this type of farming. The territorial differentiation is as follows: as the structure and form of agricultural production

differ from region to region owing to the natural conditions and the traditions of production, the depth of the contradiction that has arisen between the new method of production and the farmstead as well as the degree of the resulting decrease in population is also different. On the basis of the available statistical data this can be determined, with an approximate accuracy but well reflecting the characteristics of the process, through the territorial differences of the changes in the peripheral population.

## II.

Between 1960 and 1970 the total population of the southern Great Plain decreased by 1,8 per cent. In consequence of earlier migrations away the age composition of the population of the area differs unfavorably from the national average: the natural growth of the population does not amount to 2 per cent and compensates only for about one half of the loss of 54.000 persons through migration /Table 1/.

### Components of the Migration of the Population According to Administrative Categories

	Number populati- on	Natural growth /1960 - 1969/		Difference due to migration /1960-1969/		Actual growth /1960-1969/		Number of popu- lation /1970/
		head	%	head	%	head	%	
Towns	530.736	6.176	1,2	42.215	8,0	48.391	9,2	579.127
Villages	957.860	21.402	2,2	-96.486	-10,1	-75.084	-7,9	882.776
Southern Great Plain	1.488.596	27.576	1,9	-54.271	- 3,7	-26.693	-1,8	1.461.903

The towns of the area - with the exception of Makó, Hódmezővásárhely and Csongrád - have increased in population. The joint rate of growth /9,2 per cent/ is relatively high, which is first of all due to the dynamic development /19,8 per cent/ of Szeged. The total population of the villages has decreased by 7,9 per cent. In the decade under consideration there have been only a few villages with growing populations, and even the majority of these belong to the direct attraction area of some dynamically developing centers /Fig. 1/.

On the whole the territorial differences in the direction and rates of the changes in the total population can be brought into connection with the different types of agricultural production only vaguely and indirectly.

The 1,8 per cent decrease of the total population of the southern Great Plain is the result of an 8,8 per cent increase of the urban population and a 26,7 per cent decrease of the peripheral population. /The national rates are: 7,0 and - 23,3 per cent respectively./ This means that in the southern Great Plain the urban population, besides the decrease of the total population, has grown in a greater measure than in the country as a whole.

The urban population has grown in all towns and in the majority of the villages by a total of 16,1 per cent and 3,5 per cent respectively. /Table 2/.

Changes in the urban population according to  
administrational categories

	Urban population /1960/		Change /1960-1969/		Index of re- lative change	Urban population /1970/	
	number	ratio /%/	persons	%		number	ratio /%/
Towns	434.909	82,1	70.218	16,1	6,2	505.127	87,2
Villages	609.526	63,6	21.689	3,5	12,4	631.215	71,5
Southern Great Plain	1.044.435	70,2	91.907	8,8	10,7	1.136.342	77,7

Decrease is characteristic only of the valley of the Danube, the northern and southern parts of the county of Békés and the district of Makó, i.e. areas where the ratio of the peripheral population is already minimal. The villages of the sandy area of the land between the Danube and the Tisza stand out with a growth rate of the urban population exceeding even the average of the towns. The majority of these villages, as independent administrative units, are young; they separated themselves from the areas of other villages and towns with large outlying districts some twenty years ago. The center of these villages is small, and well-ordered settlements are developing now /Fig. 2/.

The peripheral population has in its totality decreased considerably both in the towns and the villages - by about 120.000 persons. The rate of decrease has been 22,1 per cent in the peripheral population of the towns, 28,0 per cent in

the suburban population of the villages, and a total of 26,7 per cent in the peripheral population of the Southern Great Plain. As, however, the total population of the towns has grown, the index of the relative change of the peripheral population has been the highest in the towns: 28,5 per cent, as against 21,7 per cent in the villages. /Table 3/.

Changes in the peripheral population according to  
administrational categories

	Peripheral population /1960/		Change /1960-1969/		Index relative change	Peripheral population /1970/	
	number	ratio /%/	persons	%		number	ratio /%/
Towns	95.055	17,9	- 21.055	-22,1	-28,5	74.000	12,8
Villages	349.106	36,4	- 97.545	-28,0	-21,7	251.561	28,5
Southern Great Plain	441.161	29,8	-118.600	-26,7	-25,2	325.561	22,3

The decrease of the peripheral population is smaller than the average in the wine and fruit-producing sandy areas between the Danube and the Tisza. The forms of association created here have left essentially unchanged the economic basis of the farmsstead /domestic and share cultivation, household farming plot, etc/. In the valley of the Danube, in the area of the elevated loess flatland of Bácska and the land east of the Tisza, plowland cultivation has made commassation of the lands and relatively quick creation of the conditions of large-scale farming possible. In these territories the peripheral population has in ten years decreased in a greater than average measure, in some parts to less than its half. /Fig. 3/.

As a result of great and territorially different changes, essential modifications had taken place by 1970 as regards the ratio of the peripheral population to the total population. The ratio of the suburban peripheral population in the southern Great Plain altogether decreased from 29,8 per cent to 22,3 per cent; within this in the towns from 17,9 per cent to 12,8 per cent and in the villages from 36,4 per cent to 28,5 per cent. The maps of the 1960 and 1970 ratios show differences mainly in the region east of the Tisza; the region between the Danube and the Tisza is remarkable by its relative stability. /Figs. 4 and 5/.

More than three quarters of the population live on not quite 5 per cent of the territory of the southern Great Plain in areas qualified as urban; thus the density of population is high. /In 1960 1312 persons per sq km, in 1970 1428 persons per sq km./

By 1970 the density of the urban population of the towns had become more than twice that of the villages /2381 persons per sq km/. The density of the urban population of the villages

ranges between wide limits but the chief regularity of distribution is evident: the majority of the villages with low densities of population are to be found in the sandy region between the Danube and the Tisza. In spite of the tendencies toward equalization, this situation was characteristic even in 1970.

The density of the peripheral population had decreased from 25,4 to 18,6 per sq km. The values of the towns in both 1960 and 1970 were higher than those of the villages: by 1970 - owing to a smaller decrease - by more than 50 per cent.

According to the evidence of maps showing the territorial distribution in 1960 and 1970 the earlier sharp territorial differences had become more pronounced. During the ten years low density of peripheral population was associated with a great degree of decrease, and high density of the peripheral population was associated with a lower than average rate of decrease; thus the difference in the relative density of population between the two main types of production in the investigated area had grown. /Table 4/.

Changes in the density of the urban and peripheral populations according to administrative categories

	Size of urban area sq km	Density of urban population per person per sq km		Size of peripheral area sq km	Density of peripheral population per person per sq km	
		1960	1970		1960	1970
Towns.	212,18	2049,7	2380,6	2.724,49	34,9	27,2
Villages	583,68	1044,3	1081,4	14.773,23	23,6	17,0
Southern Great Plain	795,86	1312,3	1428,0	17.497,72	25,4	18,6



The density of the population in the valley of the Danube and in a large part of the elevated loess flatland of Bácska, in the areas of the Szeged district east of the Tisza, in the district of Makó and in the northern and southern parts of the county of Békés does not reach even one half of the average of the density of the peripheral population in the area. A connected area with a greater than average density of peripheral population is the whole of the region between the Danube and the Tisza and the middle parts of Békés county. The density of the peripheral population in the region of Kecskemét and in the sandy areas of the district of Szeged exceeds even double the average of the area. In these parts the density of the population of some villages and of the outlying districts of Kecskemét exceeds even 50 persons per sq km. /Kecskemét: 65,9, Hetényegyháza 69,0, Kunszállás: 66,5, Helvécia: 51,5 and Csanytelek: 75,8, Domaszék: 64,8, Zsombó: 56,1, Bordány: 51,1, Forráskút: 50,3 persons per sq km./ /Figs. 6 and 7/.

### III.

The high proportion of the peripheral population - within this of the farmland population - is a peculiar problem of the Great Plain. As the three counties constituting the southern Great Plain occupy the first place in the whole of the country on the basis of these rates, investigation of this problem in the area is particularly important.

Summarizing it can be said that the peripheral population in the southern Great Plain has decreased at a rate similar to the previous period of 1949-1960, but the rate of the decrease

has been territorially very different. The differences of the density of the peripheral population in the two main types of agricultural production areas have become sharper on account of the tendencies in the decrease of the peripheral population.

On the basis of the values of the density of the peripheral population and the lasting tendency of the territorially differing rates of decrease it can be expected that while in a large part of the area the proportion of the peripheral population will decrease to a minimum, for a long time yet we shall have to reckon with the farmstead as a form settlement in the wine and fruit-producing areas of the land between the Danube and the Tisza.

Legends

Fig. 1. Changes in the population of the southern Great Plain between 1960 and 1970.

- 1 = growth above the average of towns /9,2 %/
- 2 = growth below the average of towns /9,2 %/
- 3 = decrease smaller than the average of villages /-7,9 %/
- 4 = decrease greater than the average of villages /-7,9 %/

Fig. 2. Changes in the urban population of the southern Great Plain between 1960 and 1970.

- 1 = growth above the average of towns /16,1 %/
- 2 = growth between the average of the southern Great Plain /8,8 %/ and the average of towns /16,1 %/
- 3 = growth between the average the southern Great Plain /8,8 %/ and the average of villages /3,5 %/
- 4 = growth below the average of villages /3,5 %/
- 5 = decrease

Fig. 3. Changes in the peripheral population of the Southern Great Plain between 1960 and 1970.

- 1 = growth
- 2 = decrease smaller than the average of the southern Great Plain /- 26,7 %/
- 3 = decrease between 26,7 and 50 %
- 4 = decrease above 50 %
- 5 = no peripheral population as early as 1960

Fig. 4. The ratio of the peripheral population to the total population in the southern Great Plain /1960/

The ratio of the peripheral population:

- 1 = 0
- 2 = 0,1 - 25,0 %
- 3 = 25,1 - 50,0 %
- 4 = 50,1 - 75,0 %
- 5 = above 75,1 %

Fig. 5. The ratio of the peripheral population to the total population in the southern Great Plain /1970/

The ratio of the peripheral population:

- 1 = 0
- 2 = 0,1 - 25,0 %
- 3 = 25,1 - 50,0 %
- 4 = 50,1 - 75,0 %
- 5 = above 75,1 %

Fig. 6. The density of the urban and peripheral populations of the southern Great Plain in 1960.

Density of the peripheral population /persons per sq km/.

- 1 = lower than one half of the average /12,7/
- 2 = lower than the average /between 12,8 and 25,4/
- 3 = lower than double the average /between 25,5 and 50,8/
- 4 = higher than double the average /above 50,9/

Density of the urban population /persons per sq km/

- 5 = lower than one half of the average of villages /522,1/
- 6 = lower than the average of villages /522,2-1044,3/
- 7 = lower than the average of towns /1044,4 - 2049,7/
- 8 = higher than the average of towns /2049,8 - /

Fig. 7. The density of the urban and peripheral populations of the southern Great Plain in 1970.

Density of the peripheral population /persons per sq km/

- 1 = lower than one half of the average /9,3/
- 2 = lower than the average /9,4 - 18,6/
- 3 = lower than double the average /18,7 - 37,2/
- 4 = higher than double the average /37,3 - /

Density of the urban population /persons per sq km/

- 5 = lower than one half of the average of villages /540,7/
- 6 = lower than the average of villages /540,8 - 1081,4/
- 7 = lower than the average of towns /1081,5-2380,6/
- 8 = above the average of towns /2380,7 - /





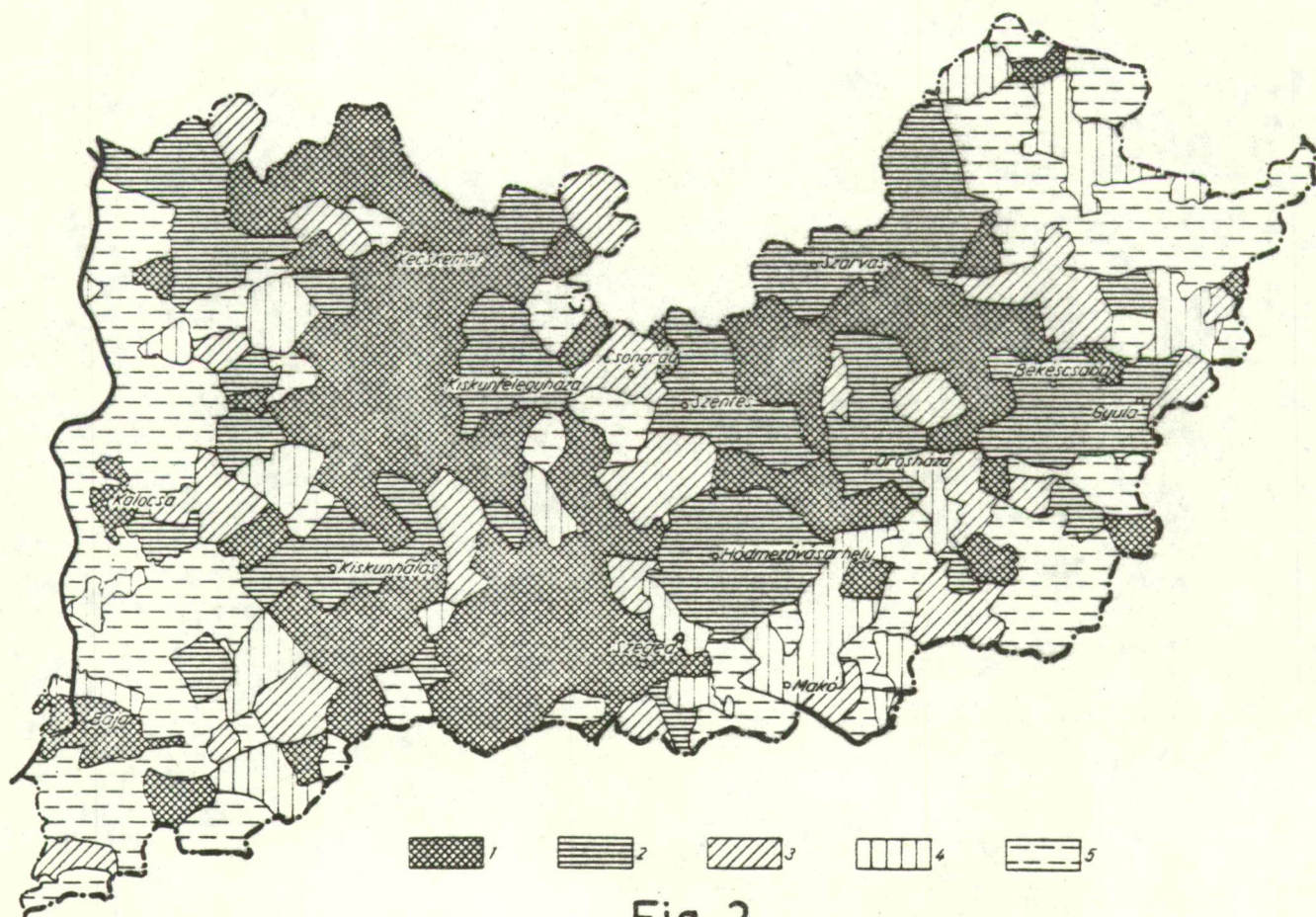


Fig. 2.

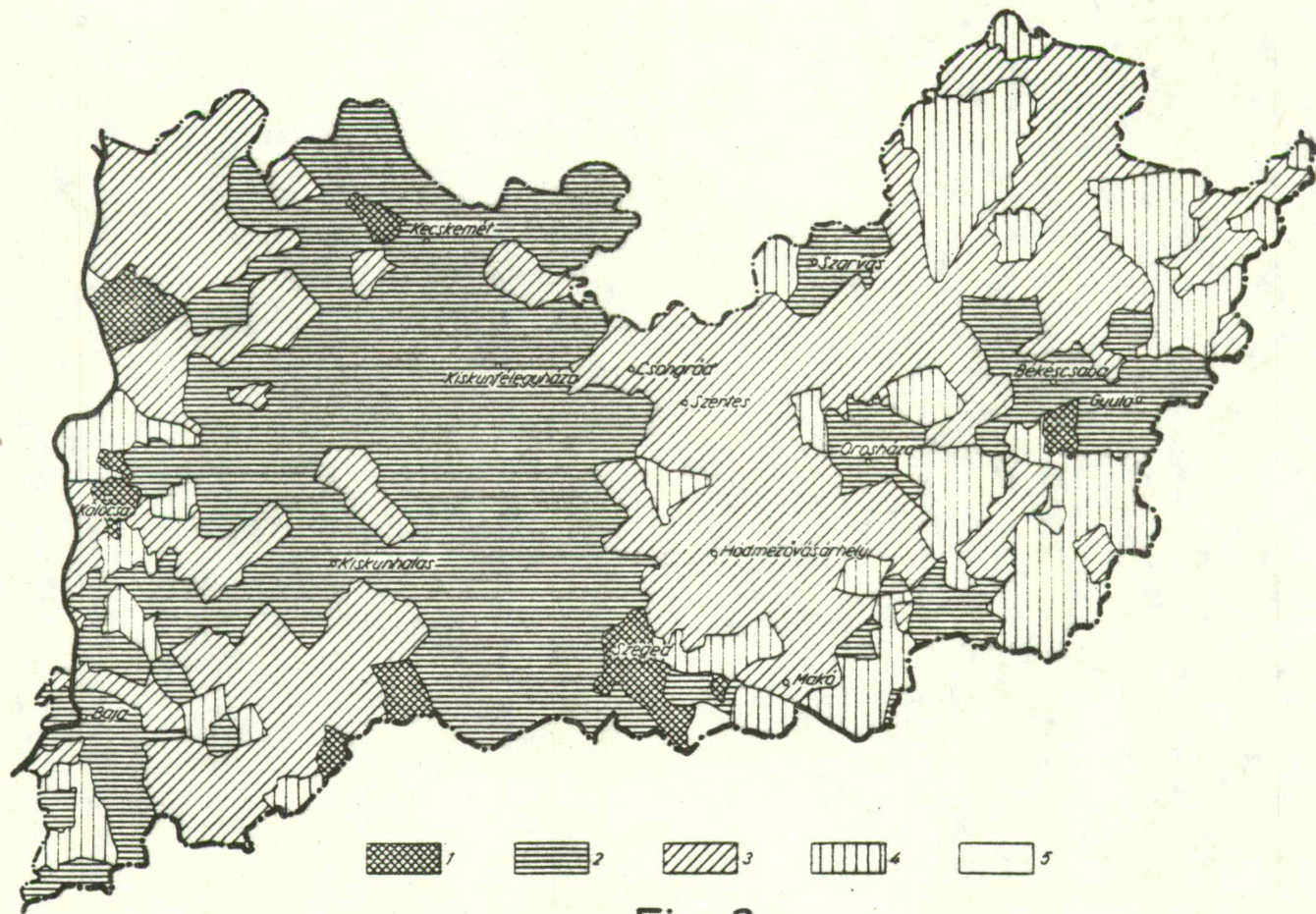


Fig. 3.











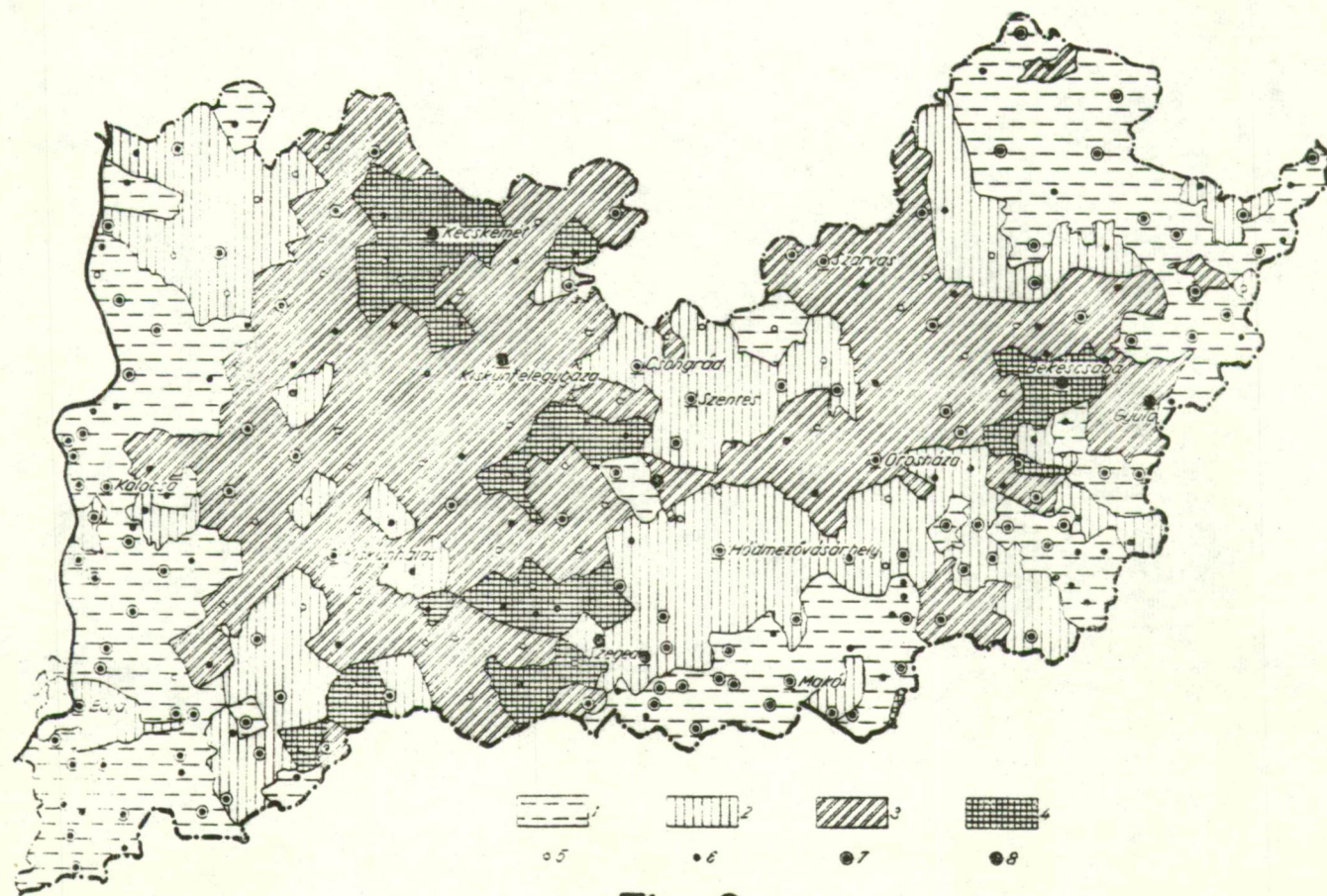


Fig. 6.



